

American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans, as well as the Georgia delegation.

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
DEPARTMENT OF GEORGIA,
Stockbridge, GA, May 16, 2022.

Representative NIKEMA WILLIAMS,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Senator Reverend RAPHAEL WARNOCK,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS AND SENATOR WARNOCK: The American Legion Department of Georgia is in full support of H.R. 6244 and S. 3369: the Max Cleland VA Medical Center Act.

We respectfully implore and sincerely request that the U.S. Congress rename the Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center as: "The Joseph Maxwell Cleland Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center."

Senator Cleland's distinguished service and noble legacy are still remembered by his fellow Georgians, the nation, and the countless veterans whose lives were greatly improved as a result of his commitment to better healthcare and veterans' services. Renaming the Atlanta VA Medical Center is but a fraction of the tremendous gratitude that our U.S. Congress can do to honor a true champion of veteran affairs.

For God and Country. . .

MARK SHREVE,
State Commander,
Department of Georgia.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS,
April 18, 2022.

Hon. NIKEMA WILLIAMS,
U.S. Representative (GA-05),
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAMS: On Behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Georgia and as Commander of the Department of Georgia (2021-2022), I am writing to support the legislation as proposed by Representative Williams and Senator Warnock (H.R. 6244/S.3369), that will rename the Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, to the Joseph Maxwell Cleland Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

KEVIN HAMMOND,
Commander Department of Georgia.

DAV,
April 13, 2022.

REF: Support of Renaming Atlanta VA Medical Center

Matt Alexis,
Legislative Assistant,
REP. NIKEMA WILLIAMS (GA-05).

GEORGIA DELEGATION IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS: U.S. Representative Nikema Williams and Senator Rev. Raphael Warnock introduced (H.R. 6244/S. 3369) which will name the Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Atlanta, Georgia, "the Joseph Maxwell Cleland Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center."

Disabled American Veterans Department of Georgia gives our full support in naming the Atlanta VAMC for the late Senator Joseph Maxwell Cleland.

Senator Cleland distinguished himself with numerous meritorious accolades during his lifetime. Naming the Medical center in his honor would be a tribute to his life's work for veterans.

Thank you to his family and friends and for your service to this country.

Sincerely,

SADIE HILL,
Sr. Vice Commander.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, July 7, 2022.

Hon. JON TESTER,
Chairman, Committee on Veterans Affairs,
Washington, DC.

Hon. JERRY MORAN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Veterans Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN TESTER AND RANKING MEMBER MORAN: We are writing to request your support to name the Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Atlanta, Georgia, the Joseph Maxwell Cleland Atlanta Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Senator Max Cleland was a veteran who fought for veterans and whose efforts indelibly changed how our nation cares for veterans today. He volunteered for service in Vietnam in 1967 and suffered severe combat injuries in 1968, eventually losing three of his limbs. He was awarded the Bronze Star and Silver Star. In 1977, Senator Cleland was appointed by fellow-Georgian President Jimmy Carter to be the youngest ever Administrator of the Veterans Administration (VA). Because of his efforts, the VA revamped its care of the invisible wounds of veterans, recognized, and began to treat post-traumatic stress disorder.

Senator Cleland was also a tireless champion of Georgia and Georgians. Born in Atlanta and raised in Lithonia, he served as a Georgia State Senator, Georgia Secretary of State, and eventually U.S. Senator from Georgia. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, he fought for Georgia's military installations while also focused on the personnel needs of the military. Senator Cleland played a critical role in the expansion of GI Bill education benefits.

On November 9, 2021, at the age of 79, Senator Cleland died, leaving behind a legacy of service, sacrifice, and joy. He served Georgia, the nation, and, in particular, veterans continuously during his 50 years of public service, improving their lives in countless ways. We believe renaming the Atlanta VA Medical Center for Senator Cleland is most appropriate for a man who spent his life serving those who walk its halls. We hope that the Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs will give our request immediate consideration.

Sincerely,

Raphael Warnock, Jon Ossoff, Nikema Williams, Hank Johnson, Andrew S. Clyde, Lucy McBath, Austin Scott, David Scott, Barry Loudermilk, Carolyn Bourdeaux, Sanford D. Bishop Jr., A. Drew Ferguson IV, Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, Rick W. Allen, Majorie Taylor Greene, Jody Hice, Members of Congress.

Mr. TAKANO. So, Mr. Speaker, this is a fitting tribute. I ask all of my colleagues to join me in passing S. 3369, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ELLZEY. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill. Once again, as we talk about heroism, you can't summarize in 3 minutes the heroism of these men. Max Cleland lost two legs and an arm, and this is a well-deserved honor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 3369.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SENATOR JOHNNY ISAKSON VA REGIONAL OFFICE ACT OF 2022

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 4359) to designate the regional office of the Department of Veterans Affairs in metropolitan Atlanta as the "Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office", and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 4359

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Senator Johnny Isakson VA Regional Office Act of 2022".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) John Hardy Isakson, known as "Johnny", was born December 28, 1944, in Atlanta, Georgia, to Julia Isakson and Edwin Andrew Isakson.

(2) Johnny Isakson graduated from the University of Georgia in 1966 with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

(3) In 1966, Johnny Isakson enlisted in the Georgia Air National Guard, serving until 1972 and attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant.

(4) Johnny Isakson gained success in private business, serving for 22 years as a real estate executive and growing his business into one of the largest of its kind in both Georgia and in the United States.

(5) Johnny Isakson was elected to the Georgia General Assembly in 1976, serving in the State House of Representatives until 1990.

(6) Johnny Isakson was elected to the Georgia State Senate in 1992, serving until 1996.

(7) In 1996, Governor Zell Miller appointed Johnny Isakson to be Chairman of the Georgia State Board of Education.

(8) Johnny Isakson was elected to represent the 6th District of Georgia in the United States House of Representatives in 1999, and served until 2005.

(9) During his time in the House of Representatives, Johnny Isakson, as a member of the Committee on Education and Labor of the House of Representatives, worked to improve American education, and was a key advocate for the bipartisan education reforms that became the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110).

(10) Johnny Isakson was elected to the United States Senate in 2004, serving until December 31, 2019.

(11) During his time in the Senate, Johnny Isakson was an exemplar of courtesy, dignity, and kindness, beloved and respected by colleagues regardless of party.

(12) Johnny Isakson, during the 111th Congress, demonstrated a bipartisan yearning for peace, and crossed party lines to support the ratification of the 2010 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation, also known as New START.

(13) During the 114th, 115th, and 116th Congresses, Johnny Isakson served as Chairman

of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, a position with which he tirelessly championed reform to improve the benefits and quality of service for our nation's military veterans.

(14) During the 114th, 115th, and 116th Congresses, Johnny Isakson served as Chairman of the Select Committee on Ethics of the Senate.

(15) The late Congressman John Lewis once described Johnny Isakson as "A man who has strong belief but also willing to work with others to get things done."

(16) On December 19, 2021, Johnny Isakson passed away, but his legacy of character and goodwill will endure as an example to all who serve, or will serve, in the United States Senate.

SEC. 3. SENATOR JOHNNY ISAKSON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ATLANTA REGIONAL OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office in Georgia shall, after the date of the enactment of this Act, be known and designated as the "Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office" or the "Isakson VA Atlanta Regional Office".

(b) REFERENCE.—Any reference in a law, regulation, map, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Regional Office referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. ELLZEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material on S. 4359.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill, S. 4359, which will rename the VA regional office in metropolitan Atlanta the Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office.

I knew Senator Isakson well from his years of service on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. Like many of my colleagues, my enduring memory of Senator Isakson is that he was a reasonable man, a tireless advocate for veterans, and was someone you could work with to find common ground—something that is all too rare in today's political environment.

I didn't always agree with Senator Isakson's politics, but I never once questioned his commitment to the men and women who have served in the U.S. military.

I worked closely with Senator Isakson on a number of significant bills, including a wide-ranging VA reform bill—the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014—that President Obama signed into law during my first term in office.

The bill expanded survivor benefits and educational opportunities and improved care for victims of sexual assault and veterans struggling with traumatic brain injuries while making important strides toward ensuring veterans' access to timely healthcare at VA medical centers.

Senator Isakson was heavily involved in other bipartisan initiatives affecting our Nation's veterans, including a 2017 law intended to improve processing of VA benefit appeals and a 2018 law giving VA the authority to expand healthcare access to community providers.

These pieces of legislation will have a profound impact on veterans' access to the benefits and services they rightfully earned for generations to come, and we owe Senator Isakson a debt of gratitude for his persistent efforts in seeing these bills through.

Senator Isakson was a veteran himself, having served as a young man in the Georgia Air National Guard from 1966 to 1972. He ran his family's real estate business for over two decades and ably represented his constituents in the Georgia House of Representatives and the Georgia Senate before serving in the U.S. House and Senate.

He has the distinction of being the longest-serving Republican Senator in Georgia history, and, at a personal level, I cannot think of a more suitable name for this VA facility—where so many civil servants work to provide veterans the benefits they earned—than the Johnny Isakson Regional Office.

S. 4359 was introduced by Senator JON OSSOFF, while the House companion was led by Representative SANFORD BISHOP of Georgia's Second Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters of support for H.R. 4359 from The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Disabled American Veterans, as well as the Georgia delegation.

THE AMERICAN LEGION,
DEPARTMENT OF GEORGIA,
June 14, 2022.

Hon. JON TESTER,
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. MARK TAKANO,
Chairman, U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. JERRY MORAN,
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. MIKE BOST,
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE U.S. CONGRESS: The American Legion Department of Georgia is in full support of S-4359: the Senator Johnny Isakson VA Regional Act of 2022.

We respectfully implore and sincerely request that the U.S. Congress favorably considers naming the regional office of the Department of Veterans Affairs in metropolitan Atlanta as the "Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office".

Senator Isakson's distinguished himself as a tireless and unrelenting advocate who

championed reform to improve the benefits and quality of service for our Nation's veterans. It is our solid and steadfast position that this Act will be the hallmark tribute to a fellow Georgian who labored to bring about better and improved healthcare and quality veterans' services. We are indebted to our veterans for their service and sacrifice. Senator Isakson recognized the debt and devoted his efforts as Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate "to make right the master of might".

Naming the Atlanta VA Regional Office in honor of Senator Isakson is a step in the right direction for the sake of veterans of the great State of Georgia and the veterans across this great Nation.

For God and Country. . .

MARK SHREVE,
(For Z.C. Debro, Dept. Adjutant),
State Commander, Department of Georgia.

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS,
Macon, Georgia, May 31, 2022.

Hon. MARK TAKANO,
Chairman, U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

CHAIRMAN TAKANO: On behalf of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Georgia and in my capacity as State Commander, I am writing to support renaming the Atlanta VA Regional Office to the "Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office."

As a member and former chair of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator Isakson worked tirelessly to bring oversight and accountability to the agency responsible for providing care and support to our nation's veterans. A veteran himself, Isakson was a member of the Senate VA Committee since joining the Senate in 2005 and played a crucial role in the massive VA reform bill, the Veterans' Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014.

Today, Georgia remains home to more than a dozen military bases, as well as more than 750,000 veterans. In addition to aiding veterans who served in years past, he has worked to strengthen our Armed Forces and continues to show unwavering commitment to the men and women serving our country today. Isakson brought commonsense leadership to Congress through bipartisan efforts to address federal spending, reduce the debt, create jobs, and reform burdensome federal regulations.

If the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Georgia may assist in any way to rename the Atlanta VA Regional Office to the "Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office," please do not hesitate to ask.

Respectfully,

KEVIN F. HAMMOND,
VFW Department of Georgia,
State Commander.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,
June 6, 2022.

Hon. JON TESTER,
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. MARK TAKANO,
Chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. JERRY MORAN,
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. MIKE BOST,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN TESTER, RANKING MEMBER MORAN, CHAIRMAN TAKANO AND RANKING MEMBER BOST: The Disabled American Veterans, Department of Georgia writes in support of legislation sponsored by Senators Jon Ossoff, Roy Blunt, and Raphael Warnock, renaming the Department of Veterans Affairs

Atlanta Regional Office, as the “Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office.”

Throughout his career, Senator Isakson was a passionate advocate for veterans in Georgia and across the country. Senator Isakson served in the Georgia Air National Guard from 1966 to 1972. Throughout his political career he found common ground across the aisle in order to achieve progress, all the while governing with compassion. As a longtime member of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs he worked to serve veterans and increase accountability at the Department of Veterans Affairs. As Chairman of the committee, he championed VA reforms that culminated in the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020.

We believe that naming the VA Atlanta Regional Office after Senator Isakson, a dedicated advocate and public servant, will honor his legacy and inspire future generations of Georgians.

Sincerely,

SADIE HILL,
Commander.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, June 15, 2022.

Hon. JON TESTER,
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. MARK TAKANO,
Chairman, U.S. House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. JERRY MORAN,
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Washington, DC.

Hon. MIKE BOST,
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN TESTER, RANKING MEMBER MORAN, CHAIRMAN TAKANO, AND RANKING MEMBER BOST: As members of the Georgia congressional delegation, we write to request your support for legislation to name the Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office the, “Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office.”

Senator Johnny Isakson served veterans, the state of Georgia, and the United States throughout his life. A native of Atlanta and a graduate of the University of Georgia, Senator Isakson served in the Georgia Air National Guard from 1966 to 1972. Following a successful business career, he served in the Georgia General Assembly and Georgia State Senate for nearly two decades, served as Chairman of the State Board of Education, and was elected to the United States House of Representatives.

In 2004, Senator Isakson was elected to the United States Senate. During his fifteen years in the chamber, he earned a reputation for courtesy, dignity, and kindness, building relationships across the aisle for the good of the country. Eventually, Senator Isakson rose to Chair the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, a role in which he championed important reforms to improve the quality and accessibility of services for our nation’s military veterans.

We believe that Senator Isakson’s service to the veterans of Georgia warrants this tremendous recognition, and that naming this facility is a fitting tribute to his legacy. Accordingly, we respectfully request the Senate and House Veterans’ Affairs Committees’ consideration and support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jon Ossoff, Sanford Bishop, Austin Scott, Buddy Carter, David Scott, Andrew Clyde, Raphael Warnock, Lucy McBath, Barry Loudermilk, Hank Johnson, Nikema Williams, Carolyn Bordeaux, Marjorie Taylor Greene, Rick Allen, Jody Hice, Drew Ferguson, Members of Congress.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ELLZEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 4359, a bill to designate the VA regional office in Atlanta as the Senator Johnny Isakson Department of Veterans Affairs Atlanta Regional Office.

Senator Isakson served over 45 years as a public servant. He retired in 2019 as the longest-serving Republican Senator from the great State of Georgia.

Senator Isakson is remembered for his contributions to the veteran community and to his home State.

His successful career of public service began when he joined the Georgia Air National Guard. After separating from the National Guard, he brought this invaluable experience to the Georgia General Assembly and to the U.S. Congress.

Senator Isakson was a dedicated advocate for our Nation’s veterans, serving as chairman for the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee for three Congresses.

Under his chairmanship, our friends on the Senate VA Committee spearheaded the enactment of critical legislation such as the VA Mission Act, the Forever GI Bill, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act, and the VA Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act.

Senator Isakson is remembered fondly by his colleagues as the embodiment of compassionate servant leadership. He had a reputation as a bipartisan Member who was willing to reach across the aisle for the good of his constituents. I can think of no better way to honor Senator Isakson’s legacy to both the citizens of Georgia and the veteran community than by naming the Atlanta regional office after him.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BISHOP) who serves as subcommittee chair on the Appropriations Committee and also as a former member of the House of Representatives House Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I am honored to speak in support of S. 4359 to rename the VA’s Atlantic regional office after a good and great man, the late Senator Johnny Isakson.

This is a companion bill to one that I introduced in the House with my colleague across the aisle, Congressman RICK ALLEN, and which the entire Georgia congressional delegation cosponsored.

A son of Georgia, Johnny Isakson was born in Atlanta and graduated from the University of Georgia. He was first a businessman and then a public servant.

I served with him in the Georgia General Assembly and then in the United States Congress where he served as a Congressman and as a U.S. Senator.

We stood side by side in support of Georgia’s military bases, families, and veterans. Together we worked on many projects to improve the lives of Georgians and Americans.

During his many years as a public servant and as the chair of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, he worked tirelessly on behalf of the Nation’s most deserving citizens: our military veterans.

It is fitting that we are taking up consideration of this bill just as we conclude commemorating Veterans Day. One of the fundamental ways Congress can demonstrate its thanks to our veterans is to provide the care they have earned and deserved.

Renaming the VA facility in Atlanta after Senator Isakson is a fitting recognition of his service to our country and his lifelong work ensuring Congress upholds America’s commitment to its veterans. I am proud to call Johnny a friend, and I know he continues to look down on us. I hope that we are inspired by his example to always give our best to our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill and to honor Johnny Isakson’s legacy of service.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ELLZEY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I encourage my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, again, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing S. 4359, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 4359.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1530

VA INFRASTRUCTURE POWERS EXCEPTIONAL RESEARCH ACT OF 2021

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5721) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve research conducted within the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5721

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,